

NSC BRIEFING

14 March 1957

**COMMUNIST STRENGTH AND DISTRIBUTION**

- I. Indonesian Communist Party is fourth largest party in Indonesia, but not much smaller than any of three larger parties.
  - A. Party membership is estimated at 500,000.
  - B. Polled over 6 million votes (approximately 17 percent of elections total vote) in 1955 parliamentary and constituent assembly; has 39 out of 260 seats in parliament.
- II. Party is strongest in Central and East Java, but has tenticals throughout Indonesia.
  - A. Ninety percent of its electoral support came from Java.
- III. Strength in non-Javanese areas is centered in all Indonesian Labor Federation (SOBBI), Indonesia's largest and best organized labor organization, and in its peasants' organization.
  - A. SOBBI has claimed membership of over 1,000,000.
    1. Its affiliates cover all phases of Indonesian industry and production, and are particularly strong among estate, transport, oil and dockworkers, and government employees.
    2. SOBBI is active in all major islands, but is strongest in Java and Sumatra.
    3. Largest affiliate is estate workers union which has claimed membership of 660,000, and is strong in estate area around Medan in North Sumatra.
    4. Largest oil workers' union in Indonesia is a SOBBI affiliate.

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- a. Claims membership of 43,000.
- b. Has unionized workers in all oil producing areas, but is principally strong in Central and South Sumatra.
- B. Peasants' organization is strongest in North Sumatra, Central and East Java.
  - 1. Membership is not known, but it has claimed membership of 150,000 in North Sumatra alone.
- IV. Communists also operate usual front organizations for veterans, youth, women, etc., which are strongest in Java.
- V. Communists publish some 15 newspapers which have combined circulation of 13 percent of total newspaper circulation in Indonesia.
- VI. Sukarno, in interests of national unity, insists that Communists be represented in government.
  - A. Some months ago he reportedly stated he regarded Communists as only true revolutionary party left in Indonesia.
    - 1. He told US ambassador he believes that by "bringing Communists to family table," he can convince them "they must be Indonesians first and break any connection they might have with Moscow or Peiping."
  - B. His concept is believed to have been strongly influenced by his impressions in Communist China of unity and "national progress."
  - C. He told US ambassador, however, that if he ever gets evidence Indonesian Communists are taking orders from Moscow he will "crush them" as he did in Madiun revolt of 1948.

**VII. If Sukarno's concept is implemented, Communists will have one representative on advisory council and probably indirect representation in cabinet.**

**A. They will significantly benefit by this participation in formal government apparatus through increased prestige, increased opportunities to influence Sukarno and national policy, and thereby increased capacity for subversion.**

**VIII. If fragmentation continues, Communists on outer islands could be controlled if army took decisive action.**

**A. Exception is area around Medan in North Sumatra where local army commander has armed 1,500 to 2,000 estate workers and is giving military training to 10-15,000 more.**

**1. Strength Communist-controlled laborers and peasants in North Sumatra make it area where Communist subversion could be undertaken with good prospects of success.**